

# Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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## DRAFT CPT MINUTES April 27, 2006

Members Present: Chair Tom Farnetti, Mono Supervisors; John Eastman, Mammoth Lakes Town Council; Brad Mettam, Caltrans; Mary Beth Hennessy, USFS/Inyo alternate; Beverly Cheeseboro, LADWP alternate; Denyse Racine, DFG

Members Absent: Jeff Bailey, USFS/Inyo; Bill Dunkelberger, BLM; Joseph Saulque, Benton Paiute Reservation; Cindi Mitton, Lahontan RWQCB; Art Sam, Bridgeport Indian Colony; Cheryl Probert, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe

Staff Present: Greg Newbry, C.D. Ritter

Guests Present: Dawne Becker, DFG; Lara Kirkner, *Mammoth Times*; Clare Cragan, Mono Lake Committee; Tom Jenkins, Skip Baker & Ray Robles, Mono County Fisheries Commission; John Frederickson & Dick Canton, Crowley Lake Fish Camp; Wilma Wheeler, Sierra Club

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1. **CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE:** Incoming Chair Tom Farnetti called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m. and led the flag salute. CPT members introduced themselves.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.
3. **MINUTES:** Approve the minutes of Feb. 23, 2006. (Eastman/Mettam. Ayes: All. Abstain: Farnetti.)
4. **AGENCY ROUNDTABLE:** Members outlined agency planning issues and pending projects.

### 5. LAHONTAN CUTTHROAT TROUT RECOVERY & MANAGEMENT

Dawne Becker, DFG associate fishery biologist, presented a PowerPoint on the Lahontan cutthroat trout, a small population of which was discovered in 1975 in Slinkard Valley at the base of Monitor Pass.

Ecological values are often at odds with use and enjoyment by the public. Challenges to the cutthroat include cattle stirring up sediment in creeks, poaching, a short growing season, road crossings, poorly placed roads, and beaver ponds. The cutthroat prefer to be in beaver ponds, but must swim upstream past barriers beavers built. When 40 dams were created, fish couldn't reproduce. Beaver trapping, however, is no longer allowed. Beavers work at night and sometimes fell whole trees across a river. With no easy access to beaver turf, LADWP helicopters look for ponding and lift intertwined logs out of the way. The DFG might ask the U.S. Marine Corps at Pickel Meadow to help with this problem.

A big new issue is fire, such as the Cannon Fire in 1999. A helicopter dropping retardant with heavy metals on the stream created a direct fish kill. The fire burned so hot into the stream that if the fire didn't kill fish, the retardant did.

In 2003, fish were killed by sediment stirred up by thunderstorms. In 2004, the fence built to keep cattle off the stream burned, and a gas diesel tanker crashed into Slinkard Creek, burning a few-mile stretch. The marines sometimes conduct activities affecting cutthroat, like eating them.

Interagency coordination could acquire more money to conduct restoration activities, such as extending cutthroat habitat, reducing current threats, increasing recreational use, and monitoring and protecting existing population.

Geneticists note that cutthroat are bottlenecked and have lost many unique characteristics, yet they still persist.

### 6. MONO COUNTY FISHERIES COMMISSION

Commissioner Skip Baker indicated that Mono County has a contract agreement with the Inland Aquaculture Group to obtain 10,000 pounds of rent fish/year (rainbow and brown) as rent for the facility. Fish can be sold to any entity wanting to buy. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Southern California Edison need to cooperate on the location of an interpretive center. The Wilson Creek diversion is on LADWP property, and a BLM land pipeline is proposed. Plans are to improve the structure

at the property line so valve diversions could control and change the direction of flow.

The Crowley Lake Marina has no operator for 2006. Baker stressed the importance of the facility, reminding that if the marina does not operate, no boats can be rented. He urged LADWP to move through the Request for Proposal process to secure an operator. Beverly Cheeseboro noted that the Board will research the matter.

Commissioner Ray Robles indicated that the Mono Supervisors created the commission because fishing provides economic benefit to the county. He has been working with the local chambers of commerce on the million-dollar trout stock.

At today's earlier meeting, the LADWP commissioners listened, but made no decisions. The intent of the meeting was to open dialog. Informal plans are for Mono representatives to meet further and for commissioners to return.

## **7. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. **WATERSHED STUDY UPDATE:** Upper Owens and West Walker science studies are complete, and public meetings will be held. Varied interests are involved, so the plan must be driven and designed by stakeholders, not Mono County or Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. The plan is about a year behind due to loss of a consultant. An invitation to submit for the East Walker River was received. A huge waste problem exists on the East Walker.
- B. **SAGE GROUSE:** Spring counts are being conducted. Preliminary Long Valley numbers show the bird population is aided by BLM efforts to prevent camping near leks. Bodie lek counts are just starting, so numbers are not yet available. Development on private lands in northern Mono is a problem. Solutions might include acquiring or trading private lands and requiring mitigation measures when land is developed. Discretionary permits such as building permits, however, can't require mitigation measures. Revisions to building permit/General Plan process could implement mitigation measures as part of the permit approval procedure. Areas of concern could be identified by GIS.
- C. **LAND TENURE:** Bill Dunkelberger of BLM submitted notes from the last meeting of the Interagency Land Tenure Committee.

**8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, June 29, 2006. Agenda: Inclusionary housing ordinance.

**9. ADJOURN:** 11:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
C.D. Ritter, team secretary